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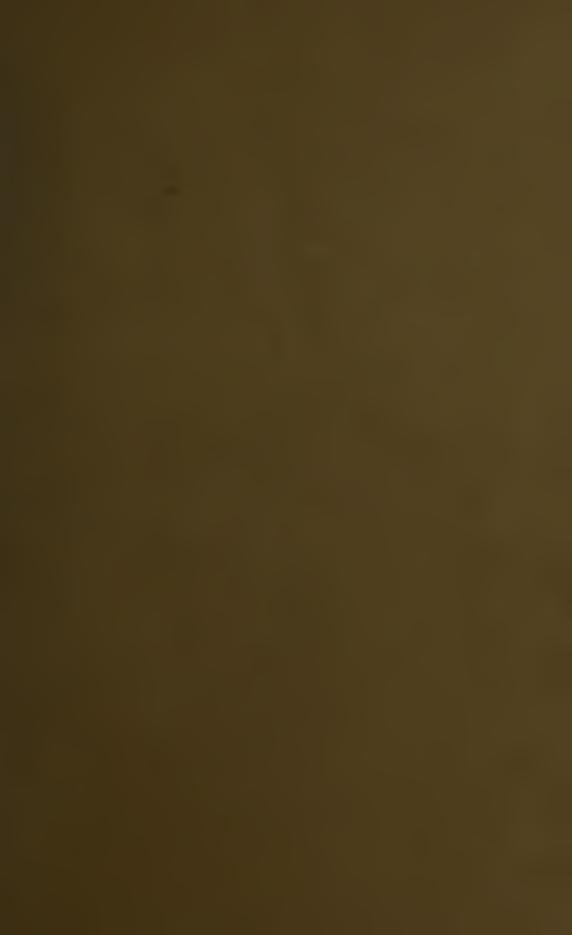
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Recreation Longs.

JOSEPH A. SEISS, D.D.



PHILADELPHIA:
GEORGE W. FREDERICK.
1878.

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"Something of Life in spirit and blood-"

"Something of Nature's fair and good."







Mith lips unskilled I sing these humble songs, Mhitst those who listen shall adjudge their worth.





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A Morning Song.

(FROM THE GERMAN.)

I will sing aloud of Thy mercy in the morning.—Ps. 59:16.

TRAISE the Lord! The sun of morning
Wakes the slumbering plains again;
All the earth to life returning
Lifts to God a joyful strain.

Praise the Lord! The dewy flowers

Bloom the praises of the King;

Heights, and fields, and leafy bowers

Ring with gladdest carolling.

Praise the Lord! From hills and mountains
Sounds aloud the thankful lay;
Stir, my soul, thy nobler fountains,
Bless the Lord for new-born day.

An Evening Song.

FOR THE LITTLE ONES.

Have ye never read, Out of the mouths of babes and sucklings Thou hast perfected praise?—MATT. 21:16.

Even so it is not the will of your Father which is in heaven, that one of these little ones should perish.—Matt. 18:14.

POLY Jesus! Here I bow,
Hear the prayers I offer now;
By Thy mercy meek and mild,
Listen to Thy little child.

Gracious Saviour! Be my Guide, Keep me always near Thy side; Watch around my bed this night, Bring me safe to morning light.

Wrongs that I have done forgive;

Teach me better how to live.

Make me good and true like Thee;

Save my soul eternally.

Amen.

A Song for Christmas.

Kings of the earth and all people; princes and all judges of the earth; both young men and maidens; old men and children, praise the Name of the Lord.—Ps. 148: 11-13.

Outpouring their heavenly lay;

Angels are singing, singing, singing,
Jesus is born to-day!

Glory to God in the highest—glory!

Peace on the earth, good will to men;

Angels and bells resound the story,

Ring it, sing it again.

Starbeams are telling, telling, telling,
The tidings which honor this morn;
Glad hearts are swelling, swelling, swelling,
Jesus the Christ is born!
Glory to God in the highest—glory!
Peace on the earth, good will to men;

Glad hearts and stars repeat the story, Ring it, sing it again.

Shepherds are thrilling, thrilling, thrilling,
Beholding what angels had told;
Wise ones are kneeling, kneeling, kneeling,
Offering incense and gold.
Glory to God in the highest—glory!

Peace on the earth, good will to men; Shepherds and kings rehearse the story, Ring it, sing it again.

Songlets are rhyming, rhyming, rhyming,
The anthems of joy,—let them ring,—
Sweetly with bells and angels chiming
Praise for the new-born King.
Glory to God in the highest—glory!
Peace on the earth, good will to men;
Children and chimes proclaim the story,
Ring it, sing it again.

A Song for the Sanchary.

Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms, and hymns, and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord.—Col. 3:16.

In Name of Christ our King.

We gather round Thy holy Word,

And here Thy praises sing.

Accept us in Thy pardoning love,
Our thoughts engage and stay;
Vouchsafe Thy Spirit from above,
And cleanse our sins away.

Thy promised blessing now impart;
Our souls with Manna feed;
Write Thy pure Truth on every heart,
And make us Thine indeed.

Called by Thy Gospel to Thy Fold,
We on Thy Covenant rest;
And may this pearl of price untold
Make us forever blest.

Amen.



A Song of the Ending Year.

When a few years are come, then I shall go the way whence I shall not return.—Job 16: 22.

The year that came last hath departed again!

It was, but it now is no more.

If others shall come, no mortal may ken;
Time is, but time soon shall be o'er.

A year is a mile in the journey of life;

Its end marks the space we have passed;

It tells how much less of this turmoil and strife

Remains ere we come to the last.

Just three-score and ten from the birth to the bier;

How much of that limit hath gone!

The mile-posts stand thick on the path in the rear;

Before us we know not of one!

Much peril hath compassed the way we have come; Nor hope can we have for a day.

The years in their course are all numbered for some,—
In ambush, Death waits for his prey.

Blest pilgrims! So near to the goal of their race!

One pang, and their trials are done;

Beyond comes the glad consummation of grace,

The glory, the crown, and the throne.

Nor should we lament that the years are so few,

For those who have longer to wait;

'Tis good that we live, be we steadfast and true,

But better die early than late.

The last days of earth are the heaviest to bear,

The last miles the hardest to run;

The aged the largest in honor may share;

Soon dead, soonest heaven's begun.

If please it the Father these years to extend,What dangers, what conflicts, may come!O God, let Thy mercy sustain and defend,Till years land us safely at home!

To Thee, the Almighty, be praise for the past,

The Father, the Spirit, the Son!

Thy Word and Thy Promise forever shall last

Here trust we till all years be done.



A Song to the Saviour.

(FROM THE GERMAN.)

Thou art fairer than the children of men: grace is poured into Thy lips: therefore God hath blessed Thee forever.—Is. 15:2. As the appletree among the trees of the wood, so is my Beloved among the sons.—Cant. 2:3.

He is altogether levely.—Cant. 5:16.

BEAUTIFUL Saviour! King of Creation!
Son of God, and Son of man!
Truly I'd love Thee,
Truly I'd serve Thee,
Light of my soul, my Joy, my Crown.

Fair are the meadows,—fair are the woodlands,
Robed in flowers of blooming Spring;
Jesus is fairer,
Jesus is sweeter,

He makes our sorrowing spirit sing.

Bright is the sunshine,—bright is the moonlight,

Bright the sparkling stars on high;

Jesus shines brighter,

Jesus shines purer,—

Brighter than Angels in the sky.

Beautiful Saviour! Lord of the nations!

Son of God, and Son of man!

Glory and honor,

Praise, adoration,

Now and for evermore be Thine!



A Song of Song.

The Morning Stars sang together.—Job. 38:7.
How shall we sing the Lord's song in a strange land!—Ps.
137:4.

The ransomed of the Lord shall return, and come to Zion with songs.—Ps. 35:1.

Hou bid'st me sing.—'Tis well; song is divine;
It sprang from heaven, ordained of God Himself,
His gift to all His Sons who dwell on high,
And linked on earth with every sacredness.

Twas meant to make us blest, to give us wings,
To quicken every sense, to lift us up
In fond conversance with the things of God.
Both heart and soul find their divinest life
And holiest element in noble song.

The prophets all, and all God's worshippers, In earth and heaven, are full of poesy. The rapturous ode and pious note, the sound
Of harp and lyre, and voice of minstrelsy,
Have marked His people's paths in every age,
Resounded in their camps, their temples filled,
And cheered their pilgrim steps with holy joy.

This earth of ours should never want for song.

'Twas born amid the heavenly harmonies,
Inbreathed with joyous chants of Morning Stars,
Which echo yet in all its elements,—
Itself a strain of sacred melody
In God's great Poem of the Universe.
Nor hath it shrub or flower, or brook or hill,
Or aught that breathes its ambient air, but feels
Some impulse and capacity to sing.

And could what in my deepest being stirs

Be woven into fitting words and rhythm,

Thy quest would be fulfilled, and time would have

Another song which scarce could ever die.

But these are not adjuvant times for song.

Our age is iron,—iron oxydized,—

Like metal whence the spirit hath gone out;

The ring of truth, the soul, the Godward sense,

The proper life of true poetic fire,

Is weakened down, or eaten quite away.

The whirling surges of our modern times

Have overwhelmed the true-born sons of song,

Submerged them, swept them from the earth, as if

With Noah's flood, without a Noah left.

That race of gifted spirits, clad in light,
Whose hearts were furnaces of sacred thought,
Which set on fire the trains of human speech,
Ignited language with Promethean flames,
And lit the world with brightness as they passed,
Has disappeared. We hear such songs no more.

Song-themes, indeed, have met with no eclipse.

Jehovah lives. His glorious Empire stands,

His grand Creation alters not with times,
And ever thrills with Godhead, Power and Love.

'Tis more the muse, the singing heart, which lacks.

Vain man hath parted from his proper self,
Let go his moorings on the Rock of Truth
And gone for counsel to the Atheist's Creed,
Or bowed his highborn soul at Mammon's shrine,
Till all its strings have rusted, lost their tone,
And inspiration touches them in vain.

O for revival of the soul of song!—

The pulse of life beats low where song is not.

When Judah's harps on Babel's willows hang,

Jerusalem's in heaps, her sons in chains,

And Freedom bleeds beneath the curse of sin.

Man needs the ministry of holy song;
And why not hope that it shall be rebuilt?
Our very miserere sighs its plaint
Instinct with prophecy of blessed change.

A thing of God cannot forever pine;
However dark the night, a Day draws on.
And when God's New Creation casts its beams
Upon our alien world, these slackened cords,
Retuned to their primeval harmony,
Shall answer to the sweep of Hand divine,
And earth unite with heaven to celebrate
The everlasting Jubilee of Song.



A Song of the Blessed Rope.

Our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ.—Phil. 3: 20.

And He that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I make all things new.—Rev. 21: 5.

Haste to fulfil Thy Word!

Let Israel's Hope appear!

Reveal to earth her Lord!

How long shall Death yet reign,
And Hell our race oppress?
When shall earth bloom again
In Eden's blessedness?

The waves of ill are high;

The world with trouble reels;

All lands, all creatures cry:

God, speed Thy chariot-wheels!

The times are prophets now;

They preach impending doom;

Let men repentant bow;

Let saints prepare for home.

Hail to the dawning Day,

By holy seers foretold!

Hail the Messiah's sway—

The Heaven-born Age of gold!



A Song of the Sen.

The sea hath spoken, even the strength of the sea.—Ps. 23:4.

The ancient, sacred, vast, mysterious Sea,—
The Sea which rolls between two continents,
And separates them by three thousand miles.

With volume deep, it rolls, and rolls, and rolls, Heedless of man, his ships and armaments.

A thousand keels are plowing on its breast,
A thousand eyes are looking on its waves,
A thousand forms are sporting in its surf;
And yet, with solemn grandeur all its own,
It still rolls on, and thus for ever rolls.

I gaze, and gaze, upon this boundless world Of molten beauty, majesty and power. 'Twould seem as if, with holy Seer of old,
I here beheld the crystal seat of the
Almighty's Throne;—a pavement infinite,
Of fluid glass and burning gold, whereon
The Living Ones in glory stand, and cry
The Hymns which fill the glad Eternity.

From shore to shore, for full a thousand leagues,
From pole to pole, and back again to pole,
It pulsates to the movements of the heavens,
With earthquake strength rehearing evermore
The mighty Anthem of its Maker's praise.

The Sea! The Sea! The deep and awful Sea!

How doth imagination kindle here!

What visions greet us as we sit and watch

This liquid mirror of the tranquil heavens!

The Evening steals upon it, and the Moon,

Full-orbed, looms up from out the dancing waves,

And looks, with red and stolid face, as though He wondered at this night-glee on the floods.

The Stars, which shine in you celestial plains,
Or float in the empyrean depths, like isles
Of living light, or glow like vestal fires,
In Night's great Temple burning evermore,
Peer from their pearly homes, in loving groups,
And stir their limpid flames to brighter joy,
To see old Ocean kindle with their charms
And press their image fondly to his heart.

The azure Sky, kerchiefed in gilded clouds, Or donning sacred veils of spotless white, Before this ample mirror stands, intent With contemplation of her loveliness.

The setting Sun halts on the western hills

To view his glorious train upon these tides

Illumined with the sheen of golden gates

Through which his blazing chariot rolls to rest.

Anon, a thousand steeds rush from the depths,
As if to battle, shake their snowy manes,
And dash with fury on some foe unseen;
Whilst troops of billows well support the charge.
And shout the consummated victory.

Betimes the whole expanse is all ablaze,
O'erstrewn with little flames of silver fires,
Which dance and flash before the risen Sun
As if each drop were purest diamond.

And when the breath of heaven bears on these floods,
The soul of Ocean wakes, uplifts itself
In rolling hills t'embrace the ghostly storm,
Whilst God walks after in His majesty
And smiles His rainbow on the scene divine.

I wonder not that man admires the Sea;
That many seek their home upon its waves;
That toil-worn myriads throng its summer coasts;

That nations war for harbor where it rolls:

That cities plant themselves upon its shores:

That empires nestle on its outstretched arms.

The Ocean is the grand old mother-world,—
The well-spring of perennial blessedness:—
All earthly life leans on its ebb and flow.

Man needs the lands and fields, the rocks and plains.

And clings with fondness to his mountain homes:

But all were dust and death without the Sea.

You wagons, travelling the aerial paths,
Immense and high, like mountains set on wheels.
Whose shadows cover nations as they pass.
Do groan, and toil, and crash with thunderbolts.
Beneath the ponderous freight they bear aloft
To pour upon the waiting hills. These all
Are ocean-born, their treasures ocean-brewed.
The forests see them and rejoice. The springs
Break forth in happy glee. The streams exult.

The birds and meadows sing. The fields are glad.

And every object in this earthly realm

Expands in grateful honors to the Sea,

For these its life-gifts to the helpless world.

And yet, a sodden gloom broods on this Deep.

It sighs, and chafes, and moans, and never rests;

Impatiently it chides the rigid shores,

And upward strives, without the strength to rise.

One trial past, another quick succeeds,

Yet some fond aim is always unattained.

With all its brightness, still it seems oppressed,

As if some inner grief, unseen, untold,

Lay lodged and leaden on its secret heart;—

The moan goes on, the unrest never stops.

Nor can these waters ever here repose.

An eagle, caged in gold, and fed by royal hands,

Still seeks for liberty to mount the skies;

And thus, though God hath said, Here be ye stayed,

These waves are dreaming of their native home,
And look toward heaven, and lift their wings, and leap,
In hope of some translation to be won—
Some grand redemption which shall set them free.

The Sea is true to its celestial birth,

And hath celestial aims and lineaments.

By man approached it seems to lie below,

But when he mounts upon its rolling waves,

And bids adieu to its receding shores,

He leaves the coarser world behind, beneath,

Ascends among the clouds, moves with the winds,

Converses with celestial potencies,

And loses sight of grovelling earth and dust.

The Ocean most obeys the sky, because
Related mostly to supernal worlds.

Its substance, gathered from the primal heavens,
Can scarce be rated with material things;
It seemeth more like soul made visible.

Eternal Spirit, ere the earth yet was,
Sat brooding on the floods, and found in them
Its first affinities. And down till now,
The Sea is full of awful Deity.
'Tis God's Almightiness in thinnest veil,—
The dreadest nearness of His unseen Self.
'Tis His sublimest mundane workmanship,—
The Tabernacle of Infinity.

Jehovah's voice is on this rolling deep;
His Word resounds through all its swelling waves.
It like a special Revelation speaks,
To teach the reckless world His holy Truth.

The utter vanity of all his strength,—
The emptiness of his sufficiency,—
The costs and perils of unwatchfulness,—
The need of faith,—the naturalness of prayer,—
The dread necessity of hold on God.

Full oft the sailor finds, in awful truth,

'Twixt him and death is but one fragile plank,—

That life and hope hang on a creaking shred,

And all beside is only God or Hell!

That Hand alone which made the worlds, and set
The Stars on high, and wheels the floating orbs,
And sways dominion o'er immensity,
Can give salvation from the Ocean's power.

The firmest vessels and the best-manned helms,
The highest courage and the coolest heads,
Alike are impotent against the Sea.
The giant fury of its angry waves
Engulfs whole Navies at a single stroke,
Nor feels a tremor at the ruin wrought.

Resistless, grand, unconquerable Sea!
Shadow of God and His Omnipotence!
Great Capitol of life and death alike!

I wonder at thy varied attributes:—
So yielding, gentle, yet so stern and strong!
So old, yet clad in such perpetual youth!
So good, yet with such dreadful perils fraught!
So true a servant, yet so great a King!
So joined to earth, and yet so full of heaven!

Thou earth-encircling, empire-nurturing Sea!
With tempests mantled, and with Ages crowned,
With Kingdoms bordered, in all zones supreme!
Who can withstand thine august majesty!
In vain rebellion seeks to shake thy throne,
Or spoil the glories which enwreath thy brow!
And whose riseth to resist thy sway,
Is hurled from being, and is known no more.

Unfathomed, lone, immeasurable Sea!

The Czar of Eras! Autocrat of Time!

How do our spirits in thy presence cower,

And nations tremble at thy mighty tread!

What worlds are heaved amid thy ceaseless tides!
What vast creations in thy waters swim!
What floods of sapphire pour athwart thy breast!
What death profound reigns in thy silent depths!

But who of earth may all thy mysteries know?

Or who the half of all thy wonders tell?

At home with God before earth's years began,

Thou tak'st no note of passing centuries!

Thy being, like thy waves, forever flows,

And Time's last hour still hears thy billows roll,—

Sublime, exhaustless, everlasting Sea!



















